

Remarks

Reconsideration and allowance of this application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2 and 6-8 have been amended, and new claim 9 has been added. Claims 1-9 remain pending in the application. The rejections are respectfully submitted to be obviated in view of the amendments and remarks presented herein. No new matter has been introduced through the foregoing amendments.

In response to the rejection of claims 6-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the connecting line has a first section and a second section, and that the connecting line extends continuously. Claims 6-8 have been amended to employ the first and second section terminology recited in claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 6-8 under § 112 are respectfully requested.

Entry of each of the amendments is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 102(b) - Makoto

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2000-085515 (hereinafter "Makoto"). The Office Action asserts in pertinent part that Makoto's "gas generator has a discharge port formed of a connecting line (line separating chambers 11, 12, and 14) extending substantially linearly . . ."

The rejection under § 102(b) is respectfully traversed. For at least the following reasons, the disclosure of Makoto does not anticipate Applicants' claimed invention.

As indicated above, amended claim 1 defines an airbag with a gas distributor, and a connecting line.

The gas distributor is disposed in the airbag and partly surrounds the gas generator. The gas distributor has a size greater than that of the gas generator to form a clearance for a gas passage outside the gas generator so that the gas flows between at least the upper chamber and the lower chamber through the clearance.

The connecting line has a first section and a second section extending continuously from the first section to define at least the upper chamber, the lower chamber and the gas distributor. The connecting line connects the occupant side surface and the opposite side surface of the airbag.

See Applicants' Fig. 2(a), which illustrates the gas distributor and connecting line 2 having first section 2a and second section 2b.

Makoto's air bag device is structurally different from Applicants' claimed airbag system. Contrary to the Office Action's assertion, Makoto's gas generator does not have "a discharge port formed of a connecting line (line separating chambers 11, 12, and 14) extending substantially linearly." As is evident from Makoto's Figs. 1 and 2, in addition to the line separating lower chamber 11, upper chamber 12, and front duct 14, there are at least two more lines that form "rear duct 13." As disclosed in the English-language translation of the abstract, "[a] rear duct 13 stretched obliquely upward is formed up at the rear side of a car body of the upper bag chamber 12 so as to allow gas generated by the inflator 20 to be fed upward." See in particular the illustration of rear duct 13 in Makoto's Fig. 2.

Makoto does not, therefore, describe Applicants' claimed airbag system that has, *inter alia*, the gas distributor and the connecting line.

Since Makoto does not describe each limitation of the claimed invention, Makoto does not anticipate the invention defined by Applicants' claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 under § 102(b) are respectfully requested.

In view of the above, each of the rejections under § 103(a) is also respectfully traversed.

Namely, Acker was cited to show that the lower discharge ports 44 are larger than the upper discharge ports 42, and Yokoyama was cited to show a wall 17 that directs the gas from the gas generator downwardly. Neither Acker (with respect to claims 2 and 5) nor Yokoyama (with respect to claims 3, 4, and 6-8) rectifies the above-described deficiency of Makoto.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejections of the claims and pass this application to issue.

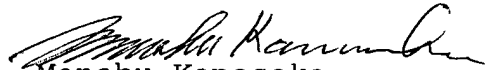
To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 11-0219, and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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